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A LETTER

TO

JACOB BRYANT, Esq.

IN DEFENCE OF

PHILOSOPHICAL NECESSITY.

BY

JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL.D. F.R.S.

Drink deep, or taste not.

POPE.

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A PREFATORY LETTER.

SIR,

IT is with real pain that I put into your hands the following letter, written in ſuch a manner as may perhaps give *you* pain, and it would have given me real pleaſure to have addreſſed you with that *reſpect* to which your character has hitherto intitled you. But in this caſe you left me no choice. Such an *Addreſs* as yours could not be anſwered, with propriety, in any other manner than that in which I have treated it. It is only *meaſure for meaſure*, and, indeed, far ſhort of that. For all that

I cenſure in you is your challenging me, in ſo high a tone of authority, on a ſubject of which you are perfectly ignorant. I no where tax you with *hypocriſy*, *impiety*, or *infidelity*; though I could have found juſt as much pretence for thoſe charges with reſpect to you, as you have with reſpect to me.

It might, I often think, have a good effect to temper the acrimony of controverſial writing, to conſider ourſelves as addreſſing our antagoniſts *in perſon*; as we ſhould not then be ſo apt to neglect the forms of *civility*, that we hold ourſelves obliged to obſerve in a perſonal interview. Had you, Sir, been introduced to me on purpoſe to *talk* with me on the ſubject of neceſſity, or had we met accidentally, and entered upon it, you would have felt, I am confident, an inſurmountable averſion to pronouncing to my face what you have addreſſed to me in print. It would have appeared to yourſelf unpardonable rudeneſs. What you now term *arrogance*, *inſincerity*, &c. you would have

ſoftened

ſoftened down to a *miſtake*, *miſapprehenſion*, *overſight*, or ſome other thing of the ſame venial nature.

We are all too apt to loſe ſight of the *perſons* of our opponents, and with that, to forget our good manners; and indeed cuſtom has, in a manner juſtified a good deal of aſperity in controverſial writings of all kinds; ſo that the world in general is not ſo much offended at it, as they would be at any rudeneſs in converſation. And with reſpect to the proper *uſe* of controverſial writing, I do not know but that this may have been the beſt upon the whole; as, by this means, men have been rouſed to exert themſelves to the utmoſt in the defence of their ſeveral opinions; ſo that the ſubject in debate has been more thoroughly inveſtigated, for the benefit of the cool byſtander.

But with reſpect to the writers themſelves, if my experience may be thought to qualify me to judge in the caſe, the preference is unſpeakably in favour of an *amicable diſcuſſion* of any important queſtion. The controverſy that I look back upon with

the moſt ſatisfaction is that with Dr. Price, which you, Sir, do not ſeem to have thought it worth your while to look into. And, though I have been more than once urged to write in the ſtile of my letter to you, and, as I have imagined, with ſome ſucceſs, a triumph ſo gained has never given me more than a momentary exultation. It is a feeling too nearly reſembling thoſe emotions which a chriſtian ought to repreſs, rather than encourage.

I wonder particularly, Sir, that you ſhould not have thought proper before you engaged in this controverſy, to peruſe the performances of thoſe who had preceded you in it. For you ſeem to be quite ignorant of what has been advanced by Dr Price, or Mr, Palmer; from both of which you might have acquired a better knowledge of the ſubject, and not have entered the liſts ſo unprepared as you have done.

I cannot account for this neglect, but from the contempt in which you ſeem to hold *diſſenters* in general, a prejudice very unwor-

unworthy of a liberal ſcholar, and a prejudice by which you are a conſiderable loſer. For though we are excluded from your univerſities, evidently with a deſign to keep us in ignorance, our common creator, who is *no reſpecter of perſons*, diſtributes *his* gifts with an impartial hand; and by making the moſt of ſuch faculties, and opportunities as he as been pleaſed to give us, and which he does not permit you to deprive us of, we are enabled both to *ſtudy* and to *write*; and even things not unworthy the notice of Mr. Bryant.

We, Sir, ill-educated, and, as you ſeem to think, narrow-minded diſſenters, being excluded from what you conſider as the only fountains of knowledge, are perhaps, on that very account, leſs confined in our reading and ſtudy, and, in conſequence, more liberal. We are glad to pick up the crumbs that fall from your table, or from any table. I have read with much pleaſure, and ſome inſtruction, every thing that bears the name of Mr. Bryant. I have

even

even wiſhed for an opportunity of being introduced to his acquaintance, and I am truly ſorry that this *Addreſs* of yours to me, and the manner in which I have been obliged to reply to it, will make it rather too unpleaſant a thing to both of us.

Notwithſtanding this, which is a ſubject of real regret to me, I am with ſincere admiration of your learning, and eſteem for your character,

SIR,

Your very humble ſervant,

J. PRIESTLEY.

London, 28th April, 1780.

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ERRATA

P. 35. l. 12 from the bottom, for *denifition*, r. *definition*.
P. 48. l. 16. for *man*, r. *men*.

To JACOB BRYANT, Esq.

SIR,

I Cannot do less than take some public notice of an *Address* to me from a person so distinguished in the republic of letters as Mr. Bryant; and had your letter been uniformly respectful, I should have thought myself honoured by it, though you had differed from me ever so much in opinion, and had even expressed ever so much abhorrence of the doctrine I have maintained. But when you compliment me in some places, and load me with abuse in others; taxing me with *self-sufficiency*, *arrogance*, *insincerity*, *impiety* and *infidelity*;

and treat me with ridicule and ſarcaſm throughout, I think that, on the balance, but little remains due to you on that ſcore; though, perhaps, any kind of notice from Mr. Bryant muſt be *ſome* honour.

It is, however, I aſſure you, Sir, your *name* only, together with the ſolicitation of ſome friends, that induces me to take any notice of your *Addreſs*; and had not a letter to me from yourſelf accompanied the pamphlet, which is anonymous, I really believe I ſhould not even have read more than a page or two in the whole work.

So groſs, Sir, and ſo uniform has been your miſconception of the whole ſubject, in all its parts, and ſo ſtrange has been your miſapprehenſion of my meaning throughout, that I think myſelf juſtified in ſaying, that I have not found one pertinent obſervation in the whole piece. Your ſtyle is alſo affectedly rhetorical, and on that account exceedingly improper for controverſy.

Had there not been an air of ſerioufneſs in ſome parts of your work (though rhetorical declamation is not the natural expreſſion of ſeriouſneſs) and had you not begun

begun with aſſuring me, that the doctrine of neceſſity was "a ſubject you had much "conſidered, and that you had even long "ago, for your private ſatisfaction, written "down your thoughts upon it," and alſo ſaid, that "when you took my treatiſe in "hand, you formed a reſolution not to be "too haſty in your concluſions, but to read "it over with that attention and care which "every thing deſerves that proceeds from "a perſon ſo juſtly celebrated," you are pleaſed to ſay, "as Dr. Prieſtley;" I ſhould have been apt to imagine, that the pamphlet had been a mere *jeu d'eſprit*, written by way of an experiment, to try how much abſurdity might be paſſed upon the public under the ſanction of ſuch a name as yours.

Finding the work to be really *your own*, that hypotheſis muſt be ſet aſide; and I am obliged to have recourſe to ſome other. But the fact is ſo extremely ſtrange, that I do not know whether any thing that has occurred to me will throw any light upon it. Two of my conjectures are all that I ſhall mention. The firſt is, that though you ſay you *formed* a reſolution not to be too haſty in your concluſions, ~~and~~ you did not really

execute it. The other is, that you have been ſo bewildered in this buſineſs, that you have neither been able to preſerve your temper, nor retain the perfect uſe of your faculties. For you ſay, p. 13, "Your arguments confound, rather than convince; ſo that believe me, good Sir, I ſcarcely know where I am, or upon what ground I ſtand."

Upon the whole, this ſolution, ſuggeſted by yourſelf, appears the moſt probable. Indeed, Sir, in this region of *metaphyſics*, you have quite loſt yourſelf. You do not know where you are, or on what ground you ſtand; as I have little doubt of fully ſatisfying all competent judges of the ſubject, and perhaps even yourſelf; though, conſidering your age, and your long ſtudy of this ſubject, I cannot promiſe myſelf much ſucceſs, in my attempts to diſentangle and new-arrange your ideas.

As to myſelf, I may, to be ſure, be miſtaken, but I think that, with reſpect to this ſubject, and your addreſs to me relating to it, I *do* know perfectly well where I am, and on what ground I ſtand. My only difficulty is how to place in the cleareſt light

a variety of fallacies and miſtakes, that are ſufficiently manifeſt in every light. It is this *choice* that breeds all my *care*. This, Sir, though you may think it ſaid lightly, I ſhould not advance at random. My letter to you, as well as yours to me, will be open to the public; and my reputation (which I muſt ſuppoſe to be as great as you repreſent it) is at ſtake.

SECTION I.

Obſervations relating chiefly to CANDOUR.

IN the whole of this buſineſs, I ſhall, if poſſible, take away every pretence for *one* part of your charge againſt me. You ſay, p. 119, that "I write with ſo much "reſerve, and my words are ſo guarded, "that you are not always ſure that you ar-"rive at my true meaning." You alſo ſay, p. 54, that "I ſoften and extenuate things "by means of ambiguous terms, of which

"I afterwards take an undue advantage, and "that I ſpeak in general when I ſhould be "particular, and in particular when I ſhould "be general."

Now, whatever other faults I may be chargeable with, I had flattered myſelf that I was innocent of *this*, and, that I had been generally *thought* to be ſo. If not, I have taken a good deal of pains to little purpoſe. I had thought that, of all writers, I had always written with the leaſt reſerve, and that it had been hardly poſſible to miſtake my meaning. I have been commended even by ſeveral of my antagoniſts for my *fairneſs* in this reſpect. Dr. Price ſays, in our *Correſpondence*, p. 353, that "I cannot be "ſufficiently admired for my fairneſs in the "purſuit of truth, and that I follow it in-"to all its conſequences, without attempt-"ing to evade or palliate them."

As I really do not know how to write with more plainneſs than I have hitherto done, I am afraid that, do what I will, I ſhall not, after all, be able to make myſelf underſtood by *you*. But if I be underſtood by *others* I muſt be content; and of this I do not much deſpair,

As to the want of *ſincerity* with which you repeatedly charge me, it is an affair between God and my own conſcience. Many circumſtances, however on which we form judgments in ſuch caſes are before the world, and ſome perſons may judge that if I had been poſſeſſed of much of the commodity called *hypocriſy*, as it is a very *marketable* one, I might have made ſomething more of it, and have kept myſelf out of ſome difficulties by the help of it.

It is poſſible, however, that, in reality, you may not be quite ſo uncharitable to me as I firſt imagined; ſince in one of the places, in which you ſuggeſt this charge, you ſeem to uſe the term in a ſenſe ſomewhat different from that in which it is commonly uſed. For you ſpeak of it as of a thing of which I may not be conſcious myſelf. "I ſhould be afraid," you ſay, p. 49. "that you have, in this inſtance, forgot "yourſelf, and not acted with that ſincerity "which the world may have expected from "you. I fear this declaration will not be "to your advantage in the opinion of your "adverſary. He will think it affects either "your head, or your heart."

Now, Sir, I muſt inform you, ſince you ſeem to be ignorant of it, that tho' a man's *memory* may fail him, and he may forget a thing of which he had been informed, and might have been expected to remember, it is not, in the nature of things, that this ſhould ever be the caſe with reſpect to *conſcience*, and *ſincerity*. If I tell a *lie*, I muſt know it at the time; becauſe the very definition of a lie implies that it *is* known at the time. A lie is not a mere *falſehood*, or untruth, but an *untruth known to be ſo*. This, however, is exactly of a piece with every other definition, or diſtinction, on which any thing has depended in the whole of your book.

Another charge of *forgetfulneſs* is rather better ſtated than this, though the argument in which it is introduced is not more ſolid than the reſt. You ſay, p. 78, "How "comes it that you ſometimes forget your "neceſſarian charity, and ſo cruelly fall "foul of Dr. Beattie, and not only of "Dr. Beattie, and his inſtinctive common "ſenſe, but of ſome others who differ "from you in opinion, and whom you treat "with not a little roughneſs. Perhaps,

" as a neceſſarian, you do not abuſe them " for their failings in the ultimate ſenſe of " the word, but in the common ſenſe of " it, which may afford them ſome conſo- " lation, if they underſtand your meaning." And, indeed, Sir, they muſt have gone a little deeper into this buſineſs than you ſeem to have done, if they do underſtand this diſtinction.

After a good deal of *ſarcaſtic humour*, terminating with your ſuppoſing that I muſt be looked upon as the " chief pillar " of the neceſſarian cauſe," you ſay " If " the virtues abovementioned" (thoſe which I have aſcribed to the influence of the doctrine of neceſſity) " do naturally " ariſe from your ſyſtem, we may ſuppoſe " them to be eminently in you. But herein, " I think that I perceive ſome little failure. " If anger and reſentment are incompatible " with neceſſity: if, when devoted to " that ſyſtem, you cannot *hate a man*, and " are really gifted with that infinitely " refined tenderneſs and compaſſion for " others, which you have mentioned, how " comes it that there is not a greater ſhow " of it; for you are ſenſible that *the tree is* " *known by its fruits*."

But

But pray, Sir, do not you profeſs the chriſtian religion, and to be a member of the eſtabliſhed church of England, and yet declare every day, that you "do things that you ought not to do," that is, things inconſiſtent with chriſtianity. You alſo pretend to *reaſon*, but is every thing you ſay or write *rational*. If you do think ſo, you are greatly miſtaken; and yet I would not thence infer that you are not a man, or a worthy man. Now I do not pretend to perfection, or a perfect correſpondence between my principles and my conduct, any more than you do. I have ſeveral times diſclaimed it, and in this very reſpect, as, with a proper ſhare of candour, you ſhould have quoted.

Beſides, how do you know, but that, nowithſtanding all the crimes you charge me with, I am not a much better man than I ſhould have been with other principles; and that, bad as the caſe is, it is not much better both for Dr. Beattie and yourſelf, that I am even a neceſſarian.

But indeed, good Sir (to return your own mode of complimenting) you greatly over-

charge

charge this part of your picture. I do not *hate* Dr. Beattie. I appeal to impartial readers, whether my addreſs to him be not on the whole, expreſſive of reſpect. I am ſure I did not intend it to be otherwiſe; and the only harſh expreſſion I have uſed with reſpect to him, is that which conſtitutes the beſt apology that I could ſuggeſt for the readineſs he ſeemed to expreſs to give up the doctrine of Divine preſcience rather than that of philoſophical liberty, concerning which you yourſelf ſay, that "a man muſt then give up the *ſcriptures*, "and, with them, his *religion*, and his "*faith*." Is not this much harſher than any thing that I have ſaid on the ſame ſubject? If Dr. Beattie be offended with *me*, he muſt be much more, Sir, with you.

I am very far from charging Dr. Beattie, as you repeatedly charge me, with *inſincerity* or *impiety*; and I appeal to our common readers, if his arrogance, I mean as a *writer* (for I have not the pleaſure that you have, of being acquainted with him perſonally) be not much greater than mine. He even thought it neceſſary to make a laboured apology for it. If there be any thing

too

too ſtrongly expreſſed in that performance it is in my examination of Dr. Reid's treatiſe. For as to Dr. Oſwald, I ſtill ſay of *his* work that could I have expreſſed even more indignation and contempt, I ſhould have done it, and have thought it juſtifiable. And yet I am far from charging him with *inſincerity*.

It is ſomething too curious to be ſuffered to paſs unnoticed, that, after quoting at full length two paragraphs of mine, which you cenſure as peculiarly obnoxious, making thea mount of them to be equivalent to making Dr. Beattie "an atheiſt, and to "deny his Creator," you add, p. 38, "But "let us ſtop here; and it were well if we "could draw a veil over what has preced-"ed, that it might be had no more in re-"membrance." I ſuppoſe, therefore, that by this you meant *to draw a veil over* my infirmities. But pray then, Sir, what would you have done if you had meant to *expoſe* them? If this be to conſign them to oblivion, what would you have done to perpetuate the remembrance of them? For, certainly, there muſt be ſome difference, though I am not able to find it.

In

In this your favourite chapter of *abuſe*, which occupies a great proportion of your pamphlet, you, on one occaſion, take a method, which, for *abſurdity* or *aſſurance* (of which you may take your choice) has, I think, never yet been equalled, if attempted, by any controverſial writer. It is when you declaim at large on the ſuppoſition that I myſelf confeſs the neceſſarians to be guilty of the very faults that I aſcribe to the Calviniſts, as diſtinguiſhed from the neceſſarians. Now to alledge that, in *your* opinion, there is no difference between them, is no apology for you; becauſe your argument, or ridicule, whatever you call it, goes upon the idea of that being *my own* opinion.

Among other things I have charged ſome Calviniſts with *malignity of heart*. You anſwer, p. 80, "But if your ſyſtem, as you "ſay, is ſuperior to all others, and is pro-"ductive of nothing but peace, charity, "and benevolence, attended with all the "gentle effects of tenderneſs and compaſſion, "whence proceeds ſuch malignity and ill-"will, with all the bitterneſs of gall. How "came the elect, whom we ſhould have

"thought

" thought exempt from theſe inferior qua-
" lities, to abound with them more than
" others."

I had charged the ſyſtem of Calviniſm with a tendency to *gloom* and *melancholy*, and had repreſented Calviniſts as " in a " ſtate of *doubt* with reſpect to the evidence " of their converſion, and what they call " the work of grace in their hearts, &c." You immediately reply, p. 82, " At this " rate, I do not ſee any the leaſt advantage " that a neceſſarian has in proof of his " orthodoxy. There is nothing that can " perſuade us of the ſuperior excellence of " his ſyſtem. He is deſcribed as in a ſtate " of uncertainty, if not of infatuation; and " his principles are ſaid to lead to gloom " and melancholy, &c." You, Sir, on a former occaſion, expreſſed a doubt whether my *head* or my *heart* was in fault. Pray where is the fault in this caſe. Where ever it lies, it is a very groſs one.

On this ſubject, I muſt, likewiſe, mention your truly pitiable ignorance of what relates to religion, and the obvious diſtinctions of it in this country. When you charge me with abuſing the Calviniſts, you conſider

ſider me as ſpeaking ill of a *community* to which I once belonged, and "a commu-"nity which has produced ſome excellent "men, particularly a Leland and a Foſter." Now, Sir, I muſt inform you (happening to be a little better informed myſelf) that the Calviniſts are no community at all, in this country, except your own church, the tenets of which are ſtrictly Calviniſtical, be that community; and of this community Leland and Foſter certainly were not.

Calviniſm, Sir, is a denomination that reſpects *opinions* only, and not *ſocieties*, or *communities*. But, ſtill, if you had known any thing of Leland, or Foſter, you muſt have known, that they were the fartheſt in the world from being in opinion Calviniſts, all of whom, though you ſay, p. 79, only *many of them*, are rigid Predeſtinarians. On the contrary, they were men particularly obnoxious to the Calviniſts, the latter of them eſpecially.

If by Calviniſts you mean the *Independents*, which is now a common uſe of the term, it makes no better for you; for Leland was a Preſbyterian, and Foſter a Baptiſt.

If

If by Calviniſts you mean *Diſſenters* in general, which I ſuſpect from your ſaying that many of them are rigid predeſtinarians, how have I quitted them, as you ſay I have done? I aſſure you, Sir, I am no member of the church of England, any more than I am of the church of Rome. Great as my crimes are, not being any ſon of hers, I have not diſgraced that venerable matron. In every poſſible ſenſe of the word, therefore, what you ſay of Calviniſts is abſurd, and contrary to fact. Such extreme ignorance of *things at home* is altogether inexcuſable in any writer.

Call the ſubject of this ſection, if you pleaſe, *prefatory matter*; it was no more than neceſſary to prepare the reader for the ſtill groſſer blunders, if poſſible, than you have made reſpecting the main argument.

SECTION

SECTION II.

Of what relates to the proper ARGUMENT *for the Doctrine of Neceſſity.*

I Had thought that, if it had been poſſible, by the uſe of language, to explain wherein *neceſſary determination*, as oppoſed to proper *ſelf determination* conſiſts, ſo that no perſon could have miſtaken it, it had been done by myſelf. It is not that a man has no *will* at all, or that he cannot *do* whatever he wills, or pleaſes; but that his volitions are *definite in definite circumſtances*. Therefore, though a man exerts a real and proper volition, it is ſo circumſcribed by the circumſtances, or motives, under which it is made, that it *cannot be otherwiſe than it is*. Now this, Sir, you appear never to have rightly apprehended, and there would be no end of quoting all

you ſay that might be produced in proof of what I have now advanced.

The very firſt paſſage that occurs on the ſubject, p. 2, ſhews it ſufficiently. "Upon "the moſt diligent inquiry," you ſay, "I "am perſuaded that mankind have a ſelf-"determining power, that, *upon mature* "*deliberation, and juſt reaſoning*, they can "make a free and proper election, and can "not only chuſe, but reject, as ſhall ſeem "beſt to their own judgment." But pray, good Sir, did any neceſſarian ever deny this. If he did, he muſt have been ſuch a defender of *neceſſity*, as you are of *liberty*. A neceſſarian is ſo far from denying this, that his principles abſolutely require it. For, according to them, ſomething that may be called *judgment* neceſſarily precedes volition, and the volition is always directed by that judgment, being determined by what to it appears preferable at the time.

"Who," you ſay, p. 39, "ever aſſert-"ed that the mind was never under any "influence, and that the will was not de-"termined by motives." What could any neceſſarian ſay more to his own purpoſe? For my own part, I cannot expreſs my

own principles in more proper, or more deciſive language.

But you add, " the great queſtion is, " whether theſe motives are coercive, whe- " ther their influence be irreſiſtible; ſo that " the mind has no power of election, and " cannot by any means reject. You will " tell me this is owing to a ſtronger mo- " tive, which overcomes the weaker. This " I ſhall not controvert." Then, let me tell you, Sir, there is nothing in the whole buſineſs that you *can* controvert, that will be to any purpoſe.

But I muſt take in what you ſubjoin. " All I now ſay is, whatever influence " there may be, we are bleſſed with rea- " ſon, to conſider and judge, and have a " power to reject or to chuſe." But, Sir, does any neceſſarian deny that man is endued with reaſon? So far is he from denying that *conſideration* and *judgment* precede volition, and direct it, that this is the very circumſtance that his ſcheme requires, in order to exclude *ſelf-determination*, which it effectually does. Indeed, Sir, here you are got upon clear *neceſſarian ground*, though, being unfortunately bewildered,

as you truly ſay of yourſelf, *you know not where you are.*

Very far, Sir, are you from advancing any thing that I can condemn when you ſay, p. 131, "Contrary to your notion, a thing "which at any time happens might have "happened otherwiſe, *if I had choſen it.*" Now this, alſo, is ſo far from being contrary to my notion, as you call it, that it is perfectly agreeable to my notion. For it implies that to have happened otherwiſe, a different choice muſt have been made; and you are as far as I can be from ſuppoſing that choice is not determined by motives.

In p. 27, you deſcribe a particular mental proceſs, and then add, "You will ſay, "as uſual, there muſt be a motive for this. "We will grant there may, for inſtance a "proſpect of future good, or immediate "gratification. But this motive often "ariſes at my will, and proceeds from my "own boſom." But if ſo, then, according to your own ſuppoſition, whence ariſes that will which called up the motive, but from ſome antecedent motive. For certainly the volition that calls up the motive is as much a volition, as that which is finally produced

duced by the motive. Will cannot be one thing, and have one ſet of properties, in one caſe, and be quite another thing, and have another ſet of properties, in another caſe.

What, Sir, but a miſtake of the very ground of this controverſy could make you ſay, p. 16, "What is *involuntary* but "another word for *neceſſary?*" whereas, I had ſaid that *voluntary* is properly oppoſed to *involuntary*, and *contingent* to *neceſſary*; and this is what the firſt metaphyſical writer you ſhall look into will tell you. Conſequently, if a volition be ſo determined by the circumſtances in which it is made, as to be ſtrictly *definite*, it could not have been otherwiſe than what it is. It is, therefore, *neceſſary*. For it is upon this ground, and this only, that we denominate even the falling of a ſtone, or any thing elſe in the phyſical world, neceſſary. A thing is always ſaid to be *neceſſary*, if, *ceteris manentibus*, it could not have been otherwiſe than it is, and *contingent*, if, *ceteris manentibus*, it might have been otherwiſe.

Hence, Sir, the *contradictions* with which you are perpetually, but ignorantly, charg-

ing me, as in p. 13. "I have been one "while told that a man has a power of "doing whatever he pleaſes, uncontrolled "by any foreign principle, or power. You, "in a few pages after, aſſure me, that the "mind and will is always determined by "a cauſe foreign to itſelf." Indeed, Sir, this is no contradiction at all; becauſe foreign to the *will* is one thing, and foreign to the *mind*, another. Alſo, in direct contradiction to yourſelf, you ſpeak of an *irreſiſtible motive*, p. 96, as taking away all mental determination; though, in the paſſages lately quoted, you yourſelf ſuppoſe motives neceſſary to volition. Nothing ſure can be at the ſame time neceſſary to volition, and yet neceſſarily take away all volition. This, Sir, is too palpable. Though the motive be *irreſiſtible*, if it be a *motive*, it can influence nothing but the will, and therefore what it produces cannot be any thing but a volition.

In the ſame place you give ſuch an account of the principles of the neceſſarians, as I really cannot tell what to make of. "Does it not ſeem in vain," you ſay, "to "give a power of chuſing, and at the ſame "time to abridge us of all choice, to al-

"low

" low us a will, but to take away the power " of willing, which, according to you, " Sir, is directed by a foreign influence, an " influence not ariſing from our own judg- " ment, but an abſolute decree, an irre- " ſiſtible motive, &c."

But if, as you yourſelf allow, choice be always determined by motives, can a choice ſo made be called no choice, or is a choice determined by motives a thing that does not ariſe *from within ourſelves*. Is an irreſiſtible motive, and an abſolute decree, the ſame thing? Are they equally foreign influences; when a mere *decree* is, in its own nature, ſo very foreign to us, that it is not poſſible that it ſhould, of itſelf, affect the will at all; and a *motive* you allow to be *within us*, and always to influence us. This account, Sir, is ſo very full of contradiction and embarraſſment, that I can hardly perſuade myſelf, but that there muſt be ſomething miſprinted in the paragraph. So very incoherent a ſentence, I think I never met with before.

I muſt alſo notice another curious contradiction, which you fancy you have diſcoved in what I have obſerved on this ſubject.

You ſay, p. 8, that "the *mind*, with all "its powers, and particularly the *will*, is "never determined without ſome real or "apparent cauſe foreign to itſelf. It ſeems "impoſſible to make what you ſay here "conſiſtent with that which you mention-"ed above. In this place the will, and "the mind in general, muſt be determin-"ed by a foreign cauſe. If we look but ſix "pages backward, we find juſt the con-"trary aſſerted, viz. that men are quite "free to do whatever they will or pleaſe, "both with reſpect to the operations of "their own minds, and the motions of "their bodies, uncontrolled by any fo-"reign cauſe or principle. This ſeems to "be an abſolute contradiction."

Now, Sir, all this that you have quoted would have appeared perfectly eaſy and conſiſtent, if you had only known the very firſt principles of the doctrine of the human mind, as laid down by Mr. Locke and others, or had only conſidered, that the will is only *one* faculty of the mind, ſo that, as I have juſt obſerved, what is foreign to the *will*, may not be foreign to the *mind* or the *man*. *Judgment* is not the

will,

will, nor are *motives* the will, but yet they are not things *foreign to the mind*; ſince they neceſſarily belong to it, and exiſt in it. Long, Sir, as you ſay you have ſtudied this ſubject, you muſt ſtudy it again, and under ſome new maſter, and one who ſhall have the art of making things very plain indeed.

I cannot reſiſt the temptation of quoting another extraordinary miſtake of yours, though I muſt own that the time employed in tranſcribing ſo long an extract might have been better employed. "When this "has been thus ſettled," you ſay, p. 15, "you ſeem ſome how to compromiſe mat- "ters, and, after all, to allow to the mind "ſome power of judging for itſelf, the re- "ſult of whch you would term a *definite* "*choice*, and a *definite voluntary determina-* "*tion* By this, if I apprehend you aright, "is meant that a man has a *partial*, and "*limited* power of election. But in ano- "ther part of the work you aſſert, that in "the ſcheme of liberty and neceſſity there "is no medium. How then can we admit "of this *compromiſe*, and by what means "can theſe different aſſertions be rendered

"con-

" conſiſtent? After all that you have been " ſo good as to explain, I am ſtill left to " aſk whether I am free, or not free. " For, as to this *qualified medium*, I know " not what to make of it; as you do not " either ſufficiently define, or prove it; " and, at the ſame time, it ſeems to mili- " tate againſt your own avowed principles. " I therefore again require to know, in " reſpect to my thoughts and actions, " whether I am *voluntarily* or *neceſſarily* " determined."

Now if you had taken the trouble to look into any common *Engliſh dictionary*, you would have ſaved yourſelf the trouble of this remark, and me the trouble of copying it. For you would have found that the word *definite* means *ſtrict* and *invariable*; and therefore a *definite choice* is far from being any medium between liberty and neceſſity, but a proper *neceſſary choice*, or a choice that, conſtituted as man is, he could not but have made in any given circumſtances.

Every thing, Sir, begets its like, and one miſtake introduces another. Or elſe they naturally follow one another, to ſteal

your

your own quotation, *velut unda ſupervenit unda*. "I cannot," you ſay, p. 60, "conceive how your diſcipline and influence "can have a certain and neceſſary effect, "when other influences can counteract "your views, and when your object may "be fruſtrated." If, dear Sir, this caſe be too hard for you, I will put another exactly ſimilar to it, that you may perhaps underſtand better. Cannot you then conceive that a weight of *one pound* in the ſcale A, has a certain and neceſſary effect, though it be overbalanced by a weight of *three pounds* in the oppoſite ſcale B? Is it not of ſo much conſequence, that if *two* more pounds be added to it, it will completely balance the weight in B; whereas, without this one pound, *three* would be neceſſary for the ſame purpoſe. Make the experiment, if you pleaſe, and you will certainly find it to be ſo.

The next miſtake on which I ſhall animadvert is no leſs extraordinary. When I ſpoke of the *indiſſoluble chain of cauſes*, determining a man's volitions and actions, from his birth to his death, what ground you then ſtood upon, or whether you ſtood upon

upon any ground at all, I cannot tell (and perhaps you will be as much at a loſs to recollect yourſelf) but certainly you ſo far loſt hold of this ſame chain, that you forgot what the links where made of. To drop this figure: you imagined that the whole of this chain conſiſted of *volitions*, that the thing repreſented by it was a mere *mental proceſs*, and required uninterrupted thinking, from a man's birth to his death. But you muſt, and you ſhall be heard at length on this curious ſubject. We muſt ſee with what wonderful dexterity you handle this chain.

" Let us ſtill farther conſider," you ſay, p. 22, " this ſeries of events, this indiſſo-
" luble chain of cauſes upon which your
" ſyſtem is founded.—The chain of cauſes
" is never interrupted.—Motive ariſes from
" motive, and one idea produces another,
" and this inevitably. But, may I aſk,
" Sir, have you ever conſidered the caſe of
" *ſleep?* What connection has the laſt idea
" of a man, when he ſinks at night into
" oblivion, with the firſt thought which
" occurs to him upon his awaking in the
" morning? We have reaſon to think there

" is

" is ſcarcely a revolution of four and twen-
" ty hours but this indiſſoluble chain is
" interrupted."——

" You will perhaps ſay that men think
" in their ſleep, as is evident from their
" dreams. But do all men dream? Or if
" they do, what enſues, but a train of
" irregular and incoherent ideas, which are
" unconnected with one another, and quite
" independent of all foreign and remote
" influences. But, ſetting theſe things
" aſide, have you conſidered the ſtate of
" perſons who ſuffer a deliquium?—— of
" perſons drowned &c. In theſe inſtances,
" the connection ſpoken of muſt have been
" entirely broken off. If then the mind
" has no internal power of its own, by
" what means does it renew its train of
" thoughts, and how is it able to think
" again at all?——The laſt idea when it
" ſunk into forgetfulneſs, and the firſt
" which occurred when it *languiſhed into*
" *day*, cannot poſſibly have had any rela-
" tion to each other. There has been a
" manifeſt breach in the chain, and the
" primary influence, if it exiſted, muſt
" have been in like manner interrupted.

" From

" From whence then does the mind recover
" itſelf, and what impreſſion is it which ſets
" the train of ideas in motion? &c. Is the
" influence from within or from without?
" It cannot be any external impulſe. For
" in thoſe circumſtances no immediate
" operation of the ſenſes can make a perſon
" recur to events long paſſed——The im-
" mediate impulſe of the ſenſes, and the
" ſurrounding objects, cannot bring this
" about. And as to the *original influence*
" of which you treat, and the *chain of cauſes*,
" there has been a ſtop put to the whole,
" and the connection no longer ſubſiſts.
" This power of recollection muſt there-
" fore be from within, and is undoubtedly
" owing to a proper energy of the mind,
" a power of *ſelf-exertion*, by which it is
" enabled to call up and arrange its ideas at
" pleaſure, and to determine upon them
" as ſhall ſeem beſt. And in conſequence
" of this we may conclude, that the will
" is not under any arbitrary and blind in-
" fluence, nor directed by neceſſity."

I think, Sir, I have given you ſufficient time to manage this *chain*, but I perceive you have quite loſt your hold. However

as

as I have kept mine, I may perhaps aſſiſt you to lay hold of it once more.

Know then, that, there is in the human mind a power, or faculty, which Mr. Locke calls *the principle of aſſociation*, by means of which one idea recalls another formerly connected with it, and that, at all times, external objects have a power of exciting ſome ideas in us——Pleaſe, Sir, to read what I have now ſaid over again. And when you are quite ſure that you underſtand thus much, conſider farther whether it be not poſſible, that, after the ſoundeſt ſleep, or deliquium (the ſenſes and brain not being materially injured, and the ideas formerly impreſſed upon it not being intirely cancelled) ſome object caſually preſent, to the eye for inſtance, may affect the retina and conſequently an idea be conveyed to the ſenſorium. That idea, having had old connexions with others, may call up its friends, and theſe in like manner, their ſeveral friends and acquaintance, till the whole croud of former ideas occupies the mind, and the buſineſs of combination, and arrangement. &c. &c. as deſcribed by Mr. Locke, goes on as uſual. In the next article

article you are utterly bewildered and loſt in your own eloquence.

"From what you lay down," you ſay, p. 19, "that all perſons, in the ſame ſituation, would, after any interval, act preciſely as they had done, it follows that if the world were renewed, all the ſame occurrences would neceſſarily happen again. If, after ever ſo many myriads of ages, a man were formed in the ſame manner, and in the ſame circumſtances, as the perſon from whom we are all deſcended, he would act exactly as Adam is preſumed to have acted: he would have the ſame poſterity, they would travel over the ſame ground, find out the ſame arts, at the ſame periods, and perform, without the leaſt deviation, all and every of thoſe things which have been already performed. Every ſtep they ſhould take would be found the ſame, every look, every turn, every involuntary geſture would be repeated. The winds would blow with the ſame variation, the rain muſt fall to a drop as it had done before. The very duſt, the ſmalleſt motes, which float in any medium,

" medium would be, in number and qua-
" lity, the ſame. For, according to your
" principles, the ſame original impulſe
" muſt be attended with the like conſe-
" quences. And if we allow a failure in
" the ſmalleſt degree, there muſt be ulti-
" mately an unavoidable difference through
" the whole arrangement. But ſuch dif-
" ference is inconſiſtent with that primary
" influence, and that neceſſity which you
" maintain. There muſt, therefore, be
" a perfect ſimilarity throughout. Theſe
" are the neceſſary conſequences from your
" principles, but I believe nobody will be
" perſuaded that this would ever obtain.
" Let any perſon, after he has ſigned his
" name, try to write it three or four times
" preciſely in the ſame manner, and ſee
" whether it perfectly accords. If he can-
" not do it when he undertakes it with
" premeditation, he will hardly bring it to
" perfection when he acts without deſign.
" Or let him walk an hundred yards, and
" then try to pace the ſame ground at the
" like intervals, and in the ſame time. If
" he could not perform it immediately,
" he would not effect it at the diſtance of

"three days, or thirty days, much leſs "after an interval of ages."

I have made this long quotation to give my reader a juſt idea of your great powers in the *rhetorical way*, in order to make him ſome amends for his diſappointment with reſpect to excellence of any other kind. What you want in *ideas*, you make up in *words*, and though you have not *preciſion*, you excell in *amplification*. Now I do not pretend to any excellence of *this* kind. Every man, and every animal, has his own weapons. The bull has his horns, and the horſe his heels. You have Oratory, I have Logic. So conſpicious in you, Sir, are the powers of *imagination*, that they go hand in hand with you in *learning*, in the moſt elaborate of your works.

Whether you will think the return adequate or not, you muſt be content with a *logical diſtinction*, in return for the entertainment you have afforded me; and my diſtinction is a very plain one. It is between the power of *man*, and that of *God*, which, great as it is, you had quite overlooked upon this occaſion; though, when it ſerves your purpoſe, you can declaim on this topic as copiouſly

copiouſly as upon any other, and of this I ſhall produce a ſpecimen in its proper place.

It is true, as you ſay, that no man can do any very complex thing twice over exactly in the ſame manner; but it is becauſe it is not poſſible for him to place himſelf, body and mind, in a ſituation ſufficiently exact for the purpoſe. But to convince you how little your mode of reaſoning affects a neceſſarian, I muſt give you a caſe ſimilar to it, and one that you may better comprehend.

Fill a bag with billiard balls, and then ſhake them out on the table. Every ball will, at length, ſettle in a definite place (pleaſe here to recollect the denifition of the word *definite*, or my inſtance will be nothing to the purpoſe)and were it poſſible to place them all exactly as they were before, and to pour them out exactly in the ſame manner, they would certainly ſettle in the ſame places that they occupied before. You cannot doubt of this, becauſe nothing is concerned beſides phyſical and mechanical laws, all of which you allow to operate neceſſarily; and you would laugh at any man who ſhould deny the neceſsary influence

of thoſe laws, merely becauſe neither he nor you, if you were to make the trial, could ſo place the balls in the bag, and ſo ſhake them out, as that they ſhould actually ſettle in the ſame places twice together. And, to adopt one of your own modes of polite addreſs, Believe me, Sir, the brain of a man is a much more complex thing than a bag of billiard balls. Here then, Sir, is my logical *diſtinction* and *example*, in return for your rhetorical declamation.

As I hope I have given you ſome pleaſure in ſubmitting to the peruſal of my readers ſo very long an extract from your work as the preceding, and I am deſirous of gratifying you as far as I can, I ſhall proceed to make another long extract of a ſimilar kind and not leſs excellent. "You, indeed, "tell me, Sir," p. 25, "that every thought "is predetermined, and in every act of "volition I am forcibly impelled, ſo that I "could not, in any inſtance have made my "election otherwiſe than I have done, "Every movement of the mind, you ſay, "ariſes from a *preſſing uneaſineſs*." By the way this is not what I ſay, but what Mr. Locke ſays. "This theory may ap-

"pears

" pears ſpecious, but it ſeems to run
" counter to all experiences; and the con-
" trary, if I miſtake not, is ſelf-evident.
" I ſit at this inſtant at my eaſe, in a calm
" and diſpaſſionate ſtate of mind, as you are
" pleaſed, Sir, to recommend. I perceive
" myſelf at full liberty, and know not of
" any external impulſe to determine me
" either in my thoughts or actions. I pur-
" poſe to move, but antecedently examine
" whether I am under any bias, or neceſſity,
" or directed by any foreign power. I find
" none. In the vaſt ſeries of cauſes, ſo
" often mentioned, I do not perceive one
" that will have any ſhare in the effect
" which I am about to produce. The
" whole originates in myſelf, whether I
" move my body, or my arm, or am con-
" tent with extending a finger. The
" like appears in reſpect to my thoughts.
" I am here equally free, and among the
" various objects which are ready at my
" call, I arbitrarily chuſe thoſe to which
" my fancy leads me. You tell me every
" thought is an effect, and that it is con-
" nected with a prior idea, by which it
" was produced. I cannot ſee any ſuch uni-

" form affinity or correſpondence, and to
" give a proof of my liberty and indepen-
" dence, I will for once expatiate freely,
" and produce a ſeries of unconnected ideas
" from my own imagination. I according-
" ly, without any preſſing uneaſineſs, think
" of a tree, of time, of the ocean, of dark-
" neſs of a cone, of truth, of a tower, of
" probability, of Therſites, of love, of
" Epidaurus, of Socrats, of a mole, of
" caſuiſtry, of the Iliad, of Otaheite, of
" Tenterden ſteeple, of a mole, of a mouſe-
" trap. In doing this I did not find that
" I was reſtrained by any law of nature, or
" impelled by any foreign power. Nor
" can I at laſt perceive that theſe deſultory
" thoughts have the leaſt connection with
" one another, much leſs with any prior
" ideas. You aſſure me that they muſt
" unavoidably have a reference, and that
" they are dependent upon others which
" have preceded. In ſhort, according to
" your principles, they aroſe ſo neceſſarily
" in my mind, that four days hence, or
" five years hence, in the ſame circum-
" ſtances, and with the ſame diſpoſition,
" I ſhould infallibly make the very ſame

" choice

" choice. But this ſeems contrary to ex-
" perience: for though I am as preciſely in
" the ſame circumſtances as we can ſup-
" poſe any man to be, and likewiſe in the
" ſame diſpoſition of mind; yet after an
" interval of a very few minutes, I am not
" able to go over a fourth part of this
" ſeries. And however cogent the neceſ-
" ſity may be, I can recollect very little
" more than the mole, and the mouſe-
" trap."

You think, Sir, that the curious aſſort-ment of ideas you have preſented us with had no connection, mediate, you muſt mean, or immediate. But odd as you, who appear to know ſo little of the human mind, may think it, I have no doubt but they really had. Are you ſure that you have omitted no other ideas, that might connect thoſe that you have produced? Or, which you may better recollect, did you at firſt ſet them down exactly in the order in which they now ſtand. Were not the words *love* and a *tower* a little nearer to-gether, and did not the ſtory of Hero and Leander occur to you; and are you quite

ſure that nothing ſqueezed in between the *mole* and the *mouſe-trap*.

You ſay you place yourſelf as preciſely in the ſame circumſtances as we can ſuppoſe any man to be, and likewiſe in the ſame diſpoſition of mind. But, Sir, what you may *ſuppoſe* to be the ſame, may not be *preciſely ſo*, and a very ſlight alteration in the diſpoſition of your mind, perhaps the poſition of your body, may put the *mole* in the place of the *mouſe-trap*, or, vice verſa.

That you have never read Mr. Hobbes, I take for granted. Indeed if you had, you would have known a little more of the ſubject of which you treat than you now do. Somewhere in his writings, but I do not now recollect the place, you would have found a pertinent obſervation to the preſent purpoſe, and a proper example. Some gentlemen were talking of the *civil wars* in England, when one of them ſuddenly aſked what was the value of a *Jewiſh ſhekel*. To appearance, theſe had as little connection as any two in your group. But this gentleman was more ingenuous, or more fortunate than you: for being interrogated while

the

the whole train was freſh in his memory, he ſaid the *civil war* brought to his mind the *death of king Charles*, the death of Charles *that of our Saviour*, and this made him think of the *thirty pieces of ſilver*, which he ſuppoſed were *ſhekels*, for which Judas betrayed him. Now all this proceſs might take place in leſs time than would be ſufficient to write down any of the two words in your collection. But you ſeem to have no idea of the rapidity of thought, or how ſlight circumſtances are ſufficient, by the law of aſſociation, to introduce any particular idea. And yet the connection of the ſeveral parts of your ingenious ſyſtem of mythology is often extremely delicate.

When I look over the ſeveral articles of this ſection, and ſee that you ſpeak of neceſſity as ſomething that *excludes will*, calling it a *foreign influence*, *arbitrary decree*, *chain of cauſes*, &c. &c. I cannot help thinking but that, as all our ideas of things *mental* are derived from things *corporeal*, your idea of neceſſity is that of a great iron chain, faſtened round a man's body, which he cannot get rid of, and by which he is dragged *nolens volens*. But, dear Sir, do

not

not fright yourſelf in this manner. *Neceſſity*, Sir, *philoſophical neceſſity*, is a more gentle thing than this iron chain that haunts your imagination; and though you are led by it, you at the ſame time go juſt where you pleaſe; and whenever you become a neceſſarian, you will be in the caſe of the man who found that he had been ſpeaking *proſe* all his life, though without knowing it.

SECTION III.

Of the Divine Preſcience.

I Am at length come to the topic on which you write with the greateſt pomp and power; and here being, as I ſuppoſe you thought, a *nodus deo vindice dignus*, you introduce the Divine Being himſelf as impoſing everlaſting ſilence upon me, and you pour out ſuch a torrent of ſcripture quotations, that if the *application* was at all pertinent,

nent, I ſhould have no power of reply. But this being wanting, your argument is *brutum fulmen*. As I perceive you have not yet underſtood my argument on this ſubject, I ſhall repeat it more particularly; and I think it is capable of being made ſo plain that it ſhall be impoſſible either to miſunderſtand or refute it. I ſtate it as follows:

Nothing can be *ſeen to be* what it is not, becauſe it would then *be* what it is not. The Deity himſelf cannot ſee *black* to be *white*, or *white black*; becauſe black is not white, nor is white black. If *ſight*, or *perception*, or *knowledge in general*, cannot change the antecedent nature of objects, neither can the *divine* perception or knowledge. Otherwiſe the Deity might ſee *two* to be *three*, or *three* to be *two*. And ſurely, Sir, with your leave, there cannot be any preſumption, or impiety, in ſaying this.

If this be juſt; it muſt be true, and no preſumption, to aſſert, that the Deity himſelf cannot *ſee* that to be *certain*, which is *in itſelf contingent*, or that to be contingent, which is abſolutely certain. Now, Sir, what

what is meant by any thing being *contingent* but that it either *may* or *may not* be. But for a thing to be *ſeen* as certain, it muſt *in itſelf* be certain; and therefore the *poſſibility* of its *not being* muſt be excluded. Conſequently, any event being foreſeen *certainly to be* is incompatible with its being even *poſſible* not to be. Nothing, therefore, of which it can be truly ſaid that it either *may or may not be* (which you maintain is the caſe with every determination of the mind of man) can be an object of foreknowledge, even to the Deity himſelf. To maintain the contrary is, in fact, the ſame thing as ſaying that the ſame event is both *contingent in itſelf*, and yet *certain to God*; or that, though, in reality, it may or may not be, yet, contrary to the nature and truth of things, he knows that it certainly will be. I therefore ſay that if a man be poſſeſſed of a power of proper ſelf-determination, which implies that the Deity himſelf cannot controul it, the Deity himſelf cannot foreſee what the actual determination will be. Surely, Sir, there cannot be any argument more concluſive than this. You, however, reply as follows:

" Surely,

"Surely, Sir," you ſay, p. 28, "this "is very bold, even to a degree of raſhneſs, "and at the ſame time your mode of rea- "ſoning ſeems to my judgment totally in- "concluſive. I think it may be obviated "by a thouſand circumſtances in common "life." Let us hear one of them.

"A child," you ſay, p. 29, "may de- "termine to take a walk in a garden, and "I may have a power to controul his pur- "poſe"——Indeed, Sir, I cannot go any farther with you in this caſe, becauſe I want a caſe in which there is a power of determination, that I *cannot* controul. What is your next inſtance out of the thouſand that you ſay you could produce?

"I ſow a field," you ſay, p. 16, "with "wheat, and, if I pleaſed, I could make "an alteration, by plowing it up, and ſow- "ing it with rye, or barley. But I cannot "ſee how the mere power of varying my "purpoſe, can ruin that purpoſe."—But pray, Sir, what has this to do with *preſcience?* Some of the remaining nine hundred and ninety-eight caſes muſt be produced, but all the thouſand will avail nothing, unleſs they be very different from theſe; and cer-

tainly

tainly you would not have given a ſpecimen of the *worſt* in the thouſand.

But you add, and inſiſt upon being heard, "You make no diſtinction, p. 28, between "what the Deity can do, and what he really "does; and you argue as if power and "performance were the ſame thing." But, ſurely, Sir, before any act of man can be *foreſeen*, it muſt be rendered *certain*, and there is no method of making it certain, but by controlling that power which would make it uncertain. Conſequently the foreknowledge of God muſt be perpetually at variance with the ſelf-determining power of man.

But I muſt, it ſeems, hear you farther, and I am willing to exerciſe as much patience as poſſible. "You proceed," p. 30, "to enforce your argument by the autho-"rity of Mr. Hobbes, by whom you think "the affair has been ſatisfactory ſtated. "*Denying neceſſity*, ſays this writer, "Works, p. 480, *deſtroys both the decrees*, "*and preſcience of Almighty God. For* "*whatever God has purpoſed to bring to* "*paſs by man, as an inſtrument, or foreſees* "*ſhall come to paſs, a man, if he has liberty,*

"*might*

" *might fruſtrate, and make not come to*
" *paſs; and God ſhould either not foreknow*
" *it and not decree it, or he ſhall foreknow*
" *ſuch things ſhall be as ſhall never be, and*
" *decree what ſhall never come to paſs.* What
" a raſh, contemptible, and ſhort ſight-
" ed reptile is man! Who would think
" that this inſect of a day would pre-
" ſume to limit omniſcience and control
" the powers of the Almighty! Bold and
" inconſiderate, to form a judgment of the
" divine energy by his own ſcanty faculties,
" and endeavour to reduce his creator to the
" ſtandard of man! Beſides, what a round
" of abſurdity is there in this weak and
" impious ſuppoſition. One would imagine
" that none but an idiot could have ſtated
" ſuch a caſe; wherein things are ſup-
" poſed to be foreknown which ſhall never
" be, and things decreed in conſequence of
" foreknowledge which ſhall never come
" to paſs; in ſhort, when it is ſaid that
" what God foreſees is not foreſeen, for it
" may be fruſtrated by man, and rendered
" ineffectual. This, Sir, is the argument
" which you think is clearly ſtated"

I hope,

I hope, Sir, you are now ſatisfied, and will not complain of my not giving you ſufficient attention. I did not even ſtop you when you called Mr. Hobbes, and conſequently myſelf, who quoted the paſſage from him with approbation, *weak, impious,* and an *idiot.*

Mr. Hobbes's argument is a very plain one, and the manner in which it is expreſſed is ſufficiently clear to every candid and intelligent reader. For the ſake, however, of very dull, or very captious readers (for whom it is hardly worth while to write at all) it might perhaps have been better expreſſed as follows. "Whatever God purpoſes to accompliſh by means of man, "they, if they be poſſeſſed of a ſelf-determining power, may fruſtrate. In which "caſe, God muſt either never foretel any "thing, or declare that a thing ſhall come "to paſs, which, for any thing that he can "tell, may never come to paſs at all."

Now, Sir, how does your fine flouriſh about the *power of God,* and the *weakneſs of man,* at all apply to ſuch an argument as this. What *round of abſurdity* (or ſquare of abſurdity) what *weakneſs,* or *idiocy,* or

impiety

impiety, is there in this. There are, Sir, as genuine marks of a reverence for God in the writings of Mr. Hobbes as in any of yours; and it little becomes you to charge ſo ſuperior a genius, ſo wonderfully acute a writer, and ſo excellent a ſcholar as he was, one of the firſt characters of his age in thoſe reſpects, with *weakneſs* or *idiocy*, whatever right you may have to involve *me* in the ſame charge with him. Beſides, if you mean to enter upon the ſtage of controverſial writing, and wiſh that ſuch opprobrious epithets as theſe ſhould have any effect, you ſhould be more ſparing of them, and at leaſt not produce them but where there was more of the face of probability in the application of them. Should ſuch an uſe of theſe terms, by your example, become general, we ſhall be obliged to change their ſignification in all Engliſh dictionaries.

I have another fault to find with your argument, which is, that you make that to be aſſumed by Mr. Hobbes, which he expreſly charges upon his adverſary. But this is a practiced feint with you, and an improvement of your own in the art of controverſy.

In the next place, you describe at large the manner in which man gains his knowledge. "But, my good Sir," you say, p. 31, "can you possibly think that the knowledge of the Almighty is obtained in this "servile and precarious manner, and that "his wisdom proceeds after the human "mode of reasoning. You may as well "ascribe to him the eyes of a man to gain "intelligence, and the human limbs to "perform his high operations."

Now, to return your compliment, my good Sir, you make this slight mistake, the question is not at all concerning the *manner* of obtaining knowledge, but concerning *the thing to be known*. I may go laboriously to work, in order to prove that the three internal angles of a right lined triangle are equal to two right angles, and the Deity may know this in any other manner that you can, or cannot conceive, but he cannot see them to be equal to *three* or *four* right angles. So, also, if a thing be in itself contingent, he cannot see it to be certain, let his *manner* of knowing be what it will.

I per-

I perceive, however, you will not be ſatisfied unleſs I hear you farther in the tone of *authority*, now that *argument* fails you. "Now, Sir," you ſay, p. 32, "I ſhould "be unwilling to be guilty of any diſre- "ſpect towards you, and to make uſe of "any harſh expreſſion; but ſurely you are "highly preſumptuous, not to ſay *ſelf-* "*ſufficient*." By the way, in what reſpect is *ſelf-ſufficiency* more reprehenſible than *preſumption*? "How can you, limited as "you are in your faculties, pretend to de- "termine about divine intelligence. You "tell me that you believe the ſcriptures, "and I preſume that you are ſincere." For this I am obliged to you, Sir, as it is more than you always allow me. "Do you not "then know that *the wiſdom of man is* "*fooliſhneſs with God*, Cor. iii. 19, that "*his ways are higher than our ways, and* "*his thoughts than our thoughts*, Iſ. lv. 9. "*To whom then will you liken me, and ſhall* "*I be equal ſaith the holy one*, Iſ. xl. 25. "*Haſt thou not known, haſt thou not heard,* "*that the everlaſting God, the Lord, the* "*Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth* "*not, neither is weary: there is no ſearch-*

" *ing of his underſtanding*, Iſ. xl. 28. *Thy* " *righteouſneſs*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *ſtandeth* " *like the great mountains, thy judgments* " *are like the great deep*, Pſ. xxxvi. 6. " *Who hath directed the ſpirit of the Lord,* " *Who hath inſtructed him, and taught him* " *in the path of judgment, and ſhewed him* " *the way of underſtanding*, Iſ. xl. 13, 14. " This laſt, Sir, I am ſorry to ſay, is the " part which you have taken, by pretend- " ing to preſcribe to the Deity. You have " joined yourſelf with thoſe who ſay, *How* " *doth God know, and is there wiſdom in the* " *moſt high*, Pſ. lxxiii. 11. *And thou ſayeſt* " *how doth God know, can he judge through* " *the dark cloud*, Job xxii. 13. In what " manner does the ſame ſacred writer final- " ly determine this point. Attend, Sir, " for he ſettles the whole in theſe few but " important words: *He beholdeth all high* " *things, He is a king over all the children* " *of pride*, Job xli. 34. From the quota- " tions above given we may learn to hum- " ble ourſelves when we ſpeak of our Crea- " tor, and to mention his divine attributes " with reverence."

Well, Sir, I have now heard you fairly out, and have had the patience to hear my-

ſelf ranked with *Atheiſts*, and perſons utterly *profligate and abandoned*; for ſuch only the paſſages you have quoted from the Pſalms and the book of Job reſpect. But I want to know what is all this to your purpoſe. Had you been a divine, I ſhould have concluded that it had been an extract from ſome *practical ſermon*, and that your amanuenſis had, by miſtake, got hold of this, inſtead of ſomething elſe that you had given him to tranſcribe for this place.

If, in this place, your amanuenſis has deceived you, I ſuſpect, that in the next your printer has omitted the word *not*. You ſay, p. 116, "The interference of the "Deity is quite oppoſite to the doctrine "of abſolute decrees." Whereas I think it favourable to that doctrine, and, in fact, they have always been held together. Who, Sir, believe more concerning frequent interpoſitions of the Deity than the Calviniſts, the great advocates for abſolute decrees? But as you appear not to know who the Calviniſts are, you are probably unacquainted with this circumſtance.

SECTION IV.

Of the Charge of INFIDELITY, *and the Concluſion.*

HOW you ſhould have taken it into your head that I am an unbeliever in revelation, is to me altogether unaccountable. If you had known any thing of me, either from my writings, or by character, you muſt have known that I am, by profeſſion, a *diſſenting miniſter*; that till lately I was a ſtated preacher, and now am an occaſional, and pretty frequent one. Doing this, as I now muſt do, from *choice*, certainly affords very little preſumption for your charge, unleſs you imagine (which with your extreme ignorance of every thing relating to diſſenters, you very poſſibly may) that *all diſſenters* are unbelievers, and that your

your church of England has the ſole right and property of all the chriſtianity there is in the world.

If you look over the catalogue of my publications, you will find that the greateſt part of them are on theological ſubjects. The ſecond volume of my *Inſtitutes* is a regular defence of the ſyſtem of revelation, and moſt of my philoſophical writings bear ſufficient marks of a reſpect for religion and chriſtianity.

To imagine, after this, that I am an unbeliever in chriſtianity, is not eaſily accounted for, in a *man of letters*, who might be expected to be free from the prejudices of the vulgar, who, in all ages and nations, have ranked thoſe whoſe opinions have been conſiderably different from their own with atheiſts or unbelievers. You, Sir, I muſt ſuppoſe had no other information than this, and then (not to offend your ears with the ſound of too vulgar a proverb) taking this notion, that I am an unbeliever, for granted, you fancied you found traces of it in this treatiſe of *Neceſſity*, the only work of mine, I preſume, that you ever looked into.

I ſhall only animadvert on a few of the paſſages in which this charge of infidelity is inſinuated or expreſſed. The firſt is ſo little to your, or to *any* purpoſe, that I own I can make nothing of it, and quote it only that perſons of more ſagacity than myſelf may try what they can do with it. "When, "p. 117, you have mentioned the provi- "dence of God in one part, you ſeem to ſet "it aſide in the next. In this you go "great lengths. The interpoſition of the "Deity, mentioned in the Old and New "Teſtament, is not by you uniformly al- "lowed. You aver boldly that many par- "ticular events, ſaid expreſsly to have been "appointed by God, were not appointed "by him; and even the perſons who have "been repreſented as inſpired by God, "were not under any divine influence, "p. 151, and you add, in confirmation of "what you have ſaid, that in the inſtances, "whatever they may be, to which you "allude, there appears, from the circum- "ſtances of the hiſtory, to have been no "proper interpoſition of the divine being, "no real miracle, but every thing took "place according to the common eſtabliſh-

"ed

" ed courſe of nature, p. 131. As this is " ſomewhat extraordinary, it is a pity that " you did not illuſtrate what you maintain " by ſome examples. What you mean by " there being no proper interpoſition I " know not. We have before us an alter- " native which admits of no medium. " The deity either does interpoſe, or he " does not. Therefore, if you are true to " your principles, you ſhould ſpeak out, and " maintain, without equivocation, that " God does not at all interfere in the world; " in other words, that there is no provi- " dence."

I aſk pardon, Sir, I do think I now underſtand ſomething of what you are about. But I perceive you are not at all appriſed of what *I* was about. I had ſaid, that many things were foretold which depended upon the volitions of men, which volitions were produced exactly as other volitions are, without any particular interference of the deity to control them. But tho' I was expreſſly referring to the Jews and Romans, by whom our ſaviour was crucified, and whom you yourſelf will hardly ſay were *miraculouſly inſpired* with their determi-

termination for that purpoſe, you ſeem to have imagined that I was treating concerning the providence of God in general, or of miraculous interpoſitions. To make out of this that I am an unbeliever in all revelations, diſcovers ſuch a perverſeneſs of underſtanding, as I have not yet ſeen in any writer. Sir, you will find much better proof of my being an unbeliever in my *Hiſtory of Electricity*, or on the very face of my *Chart of Biography*; and I rather wonder you ſhould not have quoted both thoſe works for that purpoſe. It muſt certainly have been becauſe you were not acquainted with them. I ſhall not preſume to follow you in what you here add concerning the *influence of God*, and the *Holy Spirit*, as you and I, I perceive, have very different ideas of what is meant by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures.

Indeed Sir, this article is of a much more ſerious nature than any that I have animadverted upon hitherto. With reſpect to other things, I have chiefly indulged myſelf in laughing at your *ignorance*, and *conceit*; but this charge of infidelity, is a moſt groſs and groundleſs *calumny*, for which you

you are accountable to a higher tribunal than that of the public, to which we now appeal.

In what I am now going to quote you charge me, Sir, with *vilifying and debaſing the apoſtles*, and more than inſinuate that I am an unbeliever in their divine miſſion; and all this merely for having advanced that they were not ſtrictly ſpeaking neceſſarians, or philoſophers. The only extenuation of your guilt is your extreme ignorance of the ſubject on which your preſumption has led you to write; on which account, the malignant paragraph I am about to quote affords abundant matter for its own refutation.

"Tho' you ſpeak with your uſual caution "and reſerve," you ſay, p. 121, "you "afford us too plainly an indication of "your real opinion of thoſe writers, to "whom you pretend that you had been ſo "much beholden. Your words are very "remarkable. *Not that I think the ſacred "writers were, ſtrictly ſpeaking, neceſſarians, "for they were not philoſophers; but their "habitual devotion naturally led them to refer "all things to God, without reflecting on the "rigorous meaning of their language; and*

"*very*

" *very probably had they been interrogated*
" *on the ſubject, they would have appeared*
" *not to be appriſed of the proper extent of*
" *the neceſſarian ſcheme, and would have*
" *anſwered in a manner unfavourable to it.*
" Who muſt not after this, pity the fate
" of the poor apoſtles and evangeliſts.
" Alas, Sir, how very low they muſt be
" in your eſtimation. They who for ages
" were thought to have been inſpired, and
" to have been peculiarly directed by the
" ſpirit of truth, are at laſt ſuppoſed not
" to underſtand their own meaning."

Here, Sir, you are once more making uſe of your own *original artifice*, and indeed we are all too apt to make the moſt of any little diſcovery of our own. When I expreſſly ſay the ſacred writers were *not neceſſarians*, and did not even underſtand the ſyſtem, could I poſſibly ſuppoſe that they meant to eſtabliſh it?

" They were not, you ſay, ſtrictly ſpeak-
" ing, neceſſarians. No, in good truth,
" Sir, nor were they in any reſpect of that
" denomination. They were not, you ſay,
" philoſophers, It is true, Sir, they might
" not underſtand the doctrine of fixed

" air,

" air, nor had they ever made any diſcove-
" ries in Electricity. To the ſquaring of
" the circle they were probably utter ſtran-
" gers. Yet, believe me, Sir, they were great
" philoſophers. And however you may
" rank yourſelf above them, they were far
" your ſuperiors in true knowledge." But Sir, do you ſuppoſe the apoſtles knew ſo much of the *heathen mythology* as you do? If not, do not you, in that reſpect, rank yourſelf above them?

" They were bleſſed above others," you ſay, p. 12. " with rational philoſophy,
" and likewiſe with a philoſophy to which
" reaſon could not poſſibly arrive, and
" which could only be obtained from the
" fountain of all wiſdom. This they had
" in full plenitude: and the whole of
" our religion, and our happineſs in conſe-
" quence of it, depends upon the teſtimony
" of theſe apoſtles, whom you thus vilify,
" and debaſe. Such were theſe lights of the
" world, theſe preachers of divine truth,
" who, it ſeems, if they had been inter-
" rogated by Dr. Prieſtley, would not
" have been able to have given him a pro-
" per anſwer." A proper anſwer to *what*, Sir,

Sir, to a thing which it no more behoved them to know, then to underſtand heathen mythology, or fixed air.

This buſineſs, Sir, is of a nature too ſerious to be treated with ridicule. If we muſt give an account of every *idle* word at the day of judgment, what apology can be made for ſuch ſhocking calumny as this? You charge me, Sir, with not being a believer in revelation, what proof have *you* given the public that you are one? If you look into my *writings*, you will find ten times as much evidence of *my* being a chriſtian; and yet I entertain no doubt of your being a believer in chriſtianity, or that your general conduct is not governed by it, though you have ſo groſly violated its precepts in this particular caſe; for which, if you *really* be a chriſtian, in the only important ſenſe of the word, you will aſk pardon of God, if not of myſelf, and of the public, alſo.

As to the *hiſtory* of the doctrine of neceſſity, till you know what *the thing itſelf* is, it is impoſſible you ſhould make any thing of the inveſtigation. As far as I yet ſee, Mr. Hobbes was the firſt who properly underſtood, and explained the doctrine. And though

though you rank me, p. 131, with what you call the *inglorious triumvirate of Collins, Hume, and Hobbes*; ſaying that *the world would have been glad to have found me in other company*, I can only ſay that, if I be in company with *truth*, and *good-ſenſe*, I always think myſelf in *good* company, whoever elſe be of the ſame party. It was diſingenuous in you, Sir, not to mention the name of Hartley on this occaſion, when I have made much more uſe of it, as an authority, than of any other. It looks as if you wiſhed to conceal any credit I might derive from the reſpect I bear to ſo excellent a man, and ſo good a chriſtian. Had you been ſo diſpoſed, you might have grouped me with a triumvirate of *chriſtian neceſſarians*, for Leibnitz, Hutcheſon, and Hartley, were ſuch.

I ſhall now, Sir, cloſe this letter, which I do without noticing many things that are extremely inconcluſive and weak in your *Addreſs* to me. Had I thought you at all qualified to diſcuſs this queſtion, I ſhould have propoſed a few *queries* to your conſideration, as I have done to others with whom I have diſcuſſed it; and, I believe I ſhall now take my final leave of you.

The

The very poor figure you have made in this buſineſs (ſo little *judgment*, accompanying a boundleſs *imagination*) makes me ſuſpect more than I ever did before, that there may be ſomething amiſs with your *Syſtem of Mythology*. The building you have reared has a fair front, the decorations are fine, and many of the rooms, I doubt not, are well proportioned; but I ſuſpect the *foundation*; and it is very poſſible that, in ſome of my rambles, which are pretty various and excurſive, I may take a walk that way, in order to take a nearer view of it.

In the mean time, I am,

SIR,

Your very humble ſervant,

7 DEC 1

J. PRIESTLEY.

London *April* 17th 1780.